

REMARKS

Reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested in view of the foregoing amendment and the following remarks.

Claims 1-18 were pending in this application. Claim 2, 10, and 17 have been cancelled and claims 1, 5, and 12 have been amended. Accordingly, claims 1, 3-9, 11-16, and 18 will be pending herein upon entry of this Amendment. For the reasons stated below, Applicant respectfully submits that all claims pending in this application are in condition for allowance.

In the Office Action mailed June 10, 2004, claims 1, 5, 6, 8, 9, 12, 13, 15, and 16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,157,760 to Akagiri (“Akagiri”), and claims 3, 11, and 18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Akagiri. To the extent these grounds of rejection might still be applied to claims presently pending in this application, they are respectfully traversed.

As indicated in the Office Action, claims 2, 4, 7, 10, 14, and 17 were objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. To advance the prosecution of this application, claims 1, 5, and 12 have been amended to include the allowable features recited in canceled claims 2, 10, and 17, respectively. Applicant respectfully submits that independent claims 1, 5, and 12, as amended, as well as all claims dependent thereon, should now be patentable over the prior art of record.

In view of the foregoing all of the claims in this case are believed to be in condition for allowance. Should the Examiner have any questions or determine that any further action is

Serial No.: 10/615,992
Art Unit: 2816

Attorney's Docket No.: MSS0002-US
Page 7

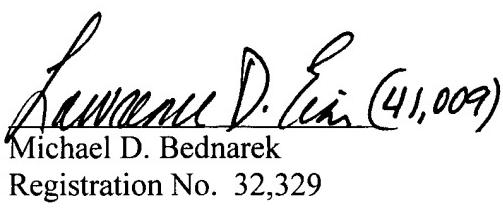
desirable to place this application in even better condition for issue, the Examiner is encouraged to telephone applicants' undersigned representative at the number listed below.

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Date: September 3, 2004

Respectfully submitted,

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